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## Senate

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### FOREIGN AFFAIRS REFORM AND RESTRUCTURING ACT OF 1997

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I admire the Senator's tenacity, and I admire his commitment to save the American taxpayers money. His tenacity on this score has exceeded his savings. Let me explain what I mean by that. He won. If this is about deficits, he won. He was right. He saved the taxpayers millions and millions of dollars. He, through his leadership, changed the way in which we used to deal with all these radios. He has won.

If I wouldn't be taken out of context--he would understand the humor in this--I wish he would take that old speech and send it home and say, 'I won.' I mean, take credit for what you did. You did a wonderful thing. You really did. You did a wonderful thing. But their ain't no more money to save. You saved it. This doesn't cost another penny.

That is No. 1.

This is not about deficits. It was about deficits, but you won. You did a good thing. You reorganized the radios.

It is like that famous line, I guess it was President Reagan's, 'The Russians just do not know how to take yes for an answer.' You won. And I am not being solicitous when I say the Nation owes you a debt of gratitude.

Now, on the second point, your tenacity: Your tenacity is well known, but I think in this case it is misplaced. This isn't about deficits anymore. Let's talk about what it really is about.

It is about whether or not Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty are anachronisms or still have a relevance--no matter how well run they are, no matter how streamlined they are, no matter how efficient they are, no matter how cost effective they are.

That is the core of the debate between the Senator and I, although I suspect he would characterize it differently. I think they are vitally important.

It is not communism now. It is chaos now. It is not communism. It is the threat of totalitarianism. It is not communism. It is freedom, market economies, and it is about journalistic integrity and independence.

Everything the Senator said is factually correct except one thing. How do I explain it? I think the rhetorical question is: Tell me how these are independent? I will tell you: Forty years of history. All of Eastern Europe said, 'When I hear VOA, I hear the State Department. When I hear Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, I hear an independent voice.' That is literally how it worked.

I don't presume to compete with my friend from Wisconsin--and I am not being solicitous when I say this--who is a Rhodes scholar and a man of significant accomplishment, with my knowledge of history. I am not trying to play games and educate him, except I suggest to him that he ask those Eastern European freedom fighters of the past 40 years. They knew that the Federal Government paid for Radio Free Europe or Radio Liberty. Why did they listen to it and take what it said as gospel and not the Voice of America, or other pronouncements that came out? The reason was the same reason that exists today in China. We set up a thing called Radio Free Asia, the same category Radio Free Europe used to be in--still is in.

What is the difference? Our Ambassador in Beijing can say with all honesty--and the Chinese Government knows that it is true--'I can't control those guys.'

What do they do? Let me give you an example of what would not happen if these radios, as we call them, were within the State Department where we

moved the USIA. They would not at this moment be able to read on air the memoirs of Wei Jing Sheng, one of China's leading dissidents who is in prison. It is driving the Chinese Government crazy that the people of China can hear unobstructed his memoirs being read on air.

Do you think the Secretary of State--this one or the last one--would have the nerve in the mix of negotiations with the Chinese on everything from proliferation to trade to upset the apple cart? I can see it now. Beijing picking up the phone, and saying, 'Stop, or we do the following with regard to these other negotiations.' We have seen it happen a hundred times. But Beijing knows that the way we have set this up means that the President cannot control it. He can come up to us and say, 'Don't fund it any longer.' Or he can try to stack the board to get people on the board who will not allow journalistic independence. But the reason why it works is that we have 40 years' experience--40 years of watching it work. The bonafides of these radios have been proven.

So the Senator is correct. Absent this history, one would say this is a veil. There are only four or five veils between the radios and independence and they are nothing but veils. History indicates that they are walls, and that they brought walls tumbling down--the Berlin wall.

I acknowledge that I probably feel more strongly about the radios and their independence than a majority of my colleagues. But I truly believe, Mr. President, if they were needed during the cold war, they are needed in this decade of chaos as much as they were then.

Look, what happens in China, in large part, is going to be a product of what the people of China know is happening.

My friend, Senator Kerry, who shares the view of my friend from Wisconsin, says, 'Look, we have CNN.' That is true. 'Look, we have the Internet.' That is true. They are all very positive and they are real and they are genuine, but I would argue they make my case. Because really what my friends are saying--I will speak for Senator Kerry--is that, although the radios are independent, we don't need this other independent voice now because we have this independent thing called CNN and we have this thing called the

Worldnet. I say to you, things are better than they were because we do have CNN. I say to you things are better in the world in terms of the access to information throughout China because we have the Worldnet. But I say to you, we will be, in the ultimate sense, penny-wise and pound-foolish if we take what also is a proven, genuinely important, worldwide, respected vehicle called the radios and do them in.

And what for? What money are we going to save? What are we saving here? Let us get this straight--not that the Senator has not been straight; he has been. But, for me, because I am kind of simple-minded, let's reorganize this and lay it out. For me, it is important to understand the pieces. The first piece of this is, the Senator says that there is all this bloated bureaucracy in this board that used to run the radios. He is right. There was leadership. We changed that. We cut these bloated salaries. We cut out the fat. We made them use the same transmitters. We consolidated the ability to transmit these messages over the air. We literally moved our

operation in Europe into Prague from Germany. We did a lot of things. This bill does not change one single solitary bit of the reform that has taken place.

Then my friend says we are going to spend more money. We put caps--through his leadership--on the amount of money that could be spent in these functions. We maintained these caps. If I can find my place in my notes here, I will find out exactly what the caps are. What page am I on? The caps for RFE/RL are \$75 million a year; Radio Free Asia, \$22 million a year. These caps are kept on this legislation.

My friend says we have created this new bureaucracy. We have created no new bureaucracy. We created this new board in 1994 through his leadership. It upsets my friend that I am not sucking that board into the State Department. There is USIA. It is sitting out here and it has, within USIA, that board. In the reorganization, led by the Senator from North Carolina, we take all the agencies that are sitting outside there and bring them into the State Department. So we take all of the USIA out except for one thing: We leave this board sitting there. We do not recreate it. We just leave it where it was, independent. But still with all the strings attached as to how much money it can spend, all the requirements for RFE and RFL regarding privatization. They all

remain, but what also remains is the journalistic integrity, the inability of the Secretary of State to say, hey, don't--don't broadcast those memoirs.

I am not suggesting this Secretary would say that. I do not know what she would say. But there is nothing she can do about that, or that a future Secretary can do about that. The Senator suggests there is going to be a new bloated bureaucracy. We have a thing in the law that exists right now called the Economy Act, which means that any lawyers that are needed by RFE/RFL, any lawyers needed by the board that is going to conduct overseas radios, can be lawyers that can be borrowed from the existing lawyers in USIA. There is no requirement to hire anybody new. And you have caps on what we can spend on them anyway.

That is how it works right now. VOA--my friend always talks about RFE and RL, Radio Liberty. There is the Voice of America, Radio and TV Marti, and Radio Free Asia. They are sitting there. We have to privatize, under the law, RFE and RL, by the same date required in the original legislation. We kept that in. But we still have these other three major pieces out there. So the notion of the board's responsibilities rests in the management of those as well, even when privatization occurs.

The other rhetorical question I would ask my friend is, he says this undermines privatization, that this proposal to privatize the European radios, which we urged in the sense of Congress in 1994, would be undermined. This provision remains intact. Moreover, the Senator is sponsor of an amendment asking for periodic reports toward this objective, which the committee included in this bill.

And, as I said, the board oversees more than the European radios, so they will have plenty to do after privatization. The others are not part of the privatization scheme.

Keep in mind the overarching rationale for privatization. It is, hey, we don't need this message going into Eastern Europe or Central Europe or the former Soviet Republics.

I want to tell you, I sure would like that message going into Byelarus. I am glad it is going in now. I sure like the idea the message is going into Bosnia. I sure like the messages going into these former Soviet states or Soviet-client states. But I acknowledge that

is a debate for another day, whether or not these radios make sense anyway. I think they make a great deal of sense.

But make no mistake about it, that is the core of the distinction between what the Senator from Wisconsin and I view to be the right course of action. You notice that the Senator is always painfully honest. He points out and acknowledges he had the privatization language still in here, but he presumes it will not be privatized now that the board is sitting out here and staying out here. I would argue that the likelihood of privatization occurring is in direct proportion to how much light is shed on the process. When you have this board sitting out here by itself, justifying its existence and its actions, it is a lot more likely that we are going to pay attention to it, particularly when we have to confirm the head of the board. As a matter of fact, the whole board requires Senate confirmation.

The Senate worries about the radios not going toward privatization. How many members of the board are there, eight? He is going to have eight shots, plus Mr. Duffy, who is going to be the new Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy. He has plenty of chances. He has nine chances in confirmation hearings before our committee. Put the board inside and it's a different story.

The other point I would like to raise--and there is so much to say on this, but you have heard me so many times I will try not to say all there is to say. The cost will go up, is the second argument. He indicates that the cost will increase by \$25 to \$30 million. He said the board and the radios now receive \$28 million in administrative services from the USIA, the U.S. Information Agency. All this is true, but who does he think is paying the \$28 million now? The \$28 million that went for them administering the agency will not go to them now. The net cost to the American taxpayer will not change. Chairman Helms and I received a letter from David Burke, the chairman of the board. I ask unanimous consent it be printed in the Record.

